

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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O 300012Z JUL 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGUI IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 178800

ALSO FOR PEACE CORPS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CT, US

SUBJECT: DETENTION WESTERN JOURNALISTS, US-CAE RELATIONS

REF: (A) BANGUI 1592; (B) BANGUI 1588

1. TWO RECENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING DETENTION OF AMERICAN
CITIZENS IN CAE, AND THIRD INCIDENT INVOLVING BRITISH
SUBJECT EMPLOYEE OF AN AMERICAN FIRM, RAISE SERIOUS
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QUESTIONS CONCERNING STATE OF GOCAE-USG RELATIONSHIP.
DEPARTMENT HAS DECIDED TO SEND AMBASSADOR QUANTON BACK TO
BANGUI TO REGISTER OUR PROTEST AND CONCERNS DIRECTLY WITH
EMPEROR BOKASSA AND TO SEEK TO AVOID FURTHER INCIDENTS.

2. AMBASSADOR IS INSTRUCTED TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS WITH
EMPEROR UPON RETURN TO POST:

A). DEPARTMENT IS DISTRESSED WITH ABRUPT AND UNCOOPERATIVE MANNER IN WHICH GOCAE HANDLED DETENTIONS. CONSULAR ACCESS WAS NOT PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE. FORMAL COMPLAINT BOTH TO EMPEROR AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS TO BE MADE ON THIS POINT. SUGGESTED TEXT FOLLOWS SEPTTEL.

B). THE USG IS ALSO CONCERNED BY EMPEROR'S REMARKS ON JULY 21 ALLEGING US GOVERNMENT COMPLICITY IN 1976 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. AS AMBASSADOR HAD MADE PREVIOUS DEMARCHES ON THIS POINT AND HAD RECEIVED BOKASSA'S ASSURANCES THAT HE HARBORED NO FURTHER SUSPICIONS OF USG INVOLVEMENT,IT IS PERPLEXING THAT THIS ISSUE SHOULD COME UP AGAIN.

C). CHARGE'S DENIALS AT BERENGO CONCERNING USG INVOLVEMENT IN COUP AND SPYING SHOULD BE RECONFIRMED TO BOKASSA.

D). USG REGRETS THAT JOURNALISTS' VISIT ENDED ON SUCH AN UNPLEASANT NOTE. WE HAVE LONG ENCOURAGED JOURNALISTS TO SEEK FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF DEVELOPMENTS IN CAE. BECAUSE OF THIS CONCERN,EMBASSY ADVISED RANDAL AND GOLDSMITH TO CALL ON VARIOUS BANGUI PERSONALITIES AND GOCAE MINISTERS IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FIRST-HAND, ACCURATE IMPRESSIONS.

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E). BOTH MEN ARE LEGITIMATE PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS REPRESENTING REPUTABLE AMERICAN NEWS ORGANIZATIONS. AT REQUEST OF ASSOCIATED PRESS, GOLDSMITH'S EMPLOYER,AND HIS AMERICAN WIFE, USG ASKS EMPEROR FOR CONSIDERATION FOR GOLDSMITH ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS. HE HAS HEART CONDITION AND FAMILY WORRIED ABOUT HIS HEALTH.

F). USG IS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY IMPLICATIONS THAT ARREST OF PCV MAHER HAS FOR BILATERAL RELATIONS. DOES THIS INCIDENT REFLECT A CHANGED GOCAE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PEACE CORPS?

G). AS EMPEROR KNOWS, PEACE CORPS PROGRAM CAN ONLY OPERATE WITH FULL SUPPORT OF GOCAE. HOW MAY WE BE ASSURED THAT ANY FUTURE INCIDENTS INVOLVING PCVS WILL BE DEALT WITH IN A SATISFACTORY MANNER INVOLVING EMBASSY AND GOCAE OFFICIALS WORKING TOGETHER?

H). DEPARTMENT WISHES TO CONTINUE THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WE HAVE ENJOYED IN THE PAST BUT THIS REQUIRES SIMILAR DESIRE ON PART OF GOCAE.

3. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE CALLED IN
AMBASSADOR MAIDOU JULY 28 TO FORMALLY PROTEST DETENTION
OF PCV JIM MAHER AND TO ENLIST MAIDOU'S SUPPORT TO FREE
HIM. REFTEL B ANNOUNCING MAHER'S EXCLUSION ARRIVED JUST
AFTER MEETING AND THIS INFORMATION WAS TELEPHONED TO
MAIDOU WHO INDICATED IT WOULD BE INCLUDED IN HIS REPORT
TO BANGUI.

DURING MEETING SEELYE EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THIS WAS
SECOND TIME CAE EMBASSY CALLED IN ON DETENTION MATTER IN
LAST TWO WEEKS. HE NOTED USG CONCERN WITH DETENTION OF
PCV ESPECIALLY FOR POSSIBLE EFFECT ON (A) VOLUNTEER
MORALE, AND (B) ABILITY OF US TO CONTINUE PROGRAM. SEELYE
REITERATED US DESIRE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH CAE
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AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER INCIDENTS
OF THIS SORT.

4. AMBASSADOR QUANTON ARRIVING BANGUI 1710 HOURS 31 JULY
VIA RK 55 FROM PARIS. PLEASE INFORM MFA AND REQUEST
APPOINTMENT WITH EMPEROR BOKASSA ASAP FOR REVIEW OF STATE
OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. VANCE

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Message Attributes

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